

Persons being, appears to have a greater share for 771
the Kurdish mountaineers than the Semitic notion of 772
an absolute and personal Allah, which is the dominant
idea of the tenets held by the *Masri*, or "Orthodox"
Omanlis. The Dervish Orders, who constitute the
mystics of Islam, are, consequently, extremely popular
with the Kurds, and the veneration of the women for 773
the *Sheikhs*, or *pirs*, as they are called, whether living 774
or dead, exceeds, if possible, that entertained for them
by the Turkish women. For, indifferent as the
Kurds may be to the dogmas of Islam, they, like all
highlanders, are exceedingly superstitious, and firmly
believe in all the occult and spiritual powers laid claim
to by the Dervish *Sheikhs*.

The saint whom the Kurds hold in the highest 775
reverence is the deceased *Sheikh*, *Khalid* of *Selleh* 776
manish, whom they consider equal to *Abul Kadr* of
Ohlaka,¹ if not to the Prophet *Mohammed* himself,
and dare in profanation to speak of by any other
title than that of *Hureti Murtaza*—"Our Lord the
Prophet." This Kurdish *pir*, whose sayings his
countrymen dignify by the name of *Kalifa*,² belonged
to the *Nakshibendi* Dervishes, a "contemplative"
Order famed for the deep mystic piety of its
members, and which has produced many saints con-
sistent in the Muslim world. To the tenets of dead, 777
or the *talaks*³ of living, Dervishes, the Kurdish 778

¹ A famous *Sheikh* who lived in the twelfth century, and founded the
Order of the *Kalaks*. Wonderful stories are told of the supernatural
powers possessed by this *Sheikh*, some of which may be found in *The
Dervishes*, by J. P. Brown.

² The name given by Muslims to the sayings or "sacred talk" of
Mohammed.

³ The ceremonies and songs by which the Dervishes unite and hold
their services.

- 773 The women resort for the cure of every ailment, physical or moral.

774 Is a child ailing, it is carried by its anxious mother to the most eminent Sheikh within reach, who cures it by imposition, not of hands, but of feet, by breathing on it with his holy breath, or by hanging some sacred charm around its little neck. The first-named remedy may sound startling, but is actually applied, as I can vouch from personal observation.* The baby is laid on its back, and the Sheikh, laying his hands on the shoulders of two of his disciples who stand on either side, places his feet and casts his entire weight for a few seconds on the child's body. The Dervishes also

775 respond dreams, read the future, and furnish every other species of occult information of which their clients may stand in need.

776 Some Christian saints belonging to the Armenian calendar are also highly revered by the Kirdish tribesmen. Of these perhaps Sarg Sarkis, or St. Sergius, is the one whose aid is most frequently sought. Kirdish warriors, when about to enter on a campaign, resort to his tomb, and seek to enlist his favour and protection by there sacrificing a ram and lighting wax tapers.

777 The strange and widespread Oriental myth of Khishro-Ellis, in his double character of sea and land deity, is also current among the Kirds, with whom he is Khishro on land and Ellis on the sea, and by whom he is invoked as a kind of guardian angel.

* I obtained this strange practice at Samsat, after a notice in the *Notes of the Month*, or "Monthly" Dervishes, as they are commonly called by Europeans.

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noted for his piety, but it not only connotes chieftainship, in the sense of the Arabs, but also has a religious meaning. Certain Kurdish chieftains, shaykhs, were supposed to have an almost magical quality in their persons, and, for example, could cure ailments by the laying on of hands. In general, each son takes the title of his father, thus Muzil Agha of Jialan is the son of Muhammad 'Ali Agha, and all of his brothers have the same distinction. As far as hierarchy is concerned, bag, as in Mahmud Bag of the Barakot tribe, appears to have greater weight than agha, but there is no definite system. The investigator suspects, in view of some of the confusion in this regard, that titles are given very much as proper names at the time of birth. On the other hand, commoners never use them, even as names, and noblemen have no such designations, although words such as amir, "princess," or khan, "chieftain," may appear in their appellations.

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The chieftain, to a large extent, is the symbol of his people's honor, tribesmen or tenants, and this is a matter of supreme importance to both Arab and Kurd. Honor has a large number of aspects of which the most important are the obligation of vengeance, safeguard and sanctuary, the integrity of women, and hospitality. If a man has been murdered, it is incumbent on his relatives to avenge his death, and this is the beginning of the vendetta or blood-feud. The peaceful solution is the payment of bedalkhwis or blood-money, an amount calculated in goods or cash, but

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this as a career simply starts to study with some mulla who already has a position, and, when judged to have shown proficiency, will begin to be supported by the mosque. Others may study at the mosque-schools in Baghdad, Damascus, or other cities, or even seek the famous Mosque of al-Azhar in Cairo. In the first case, the student can ultimately assist and replace his teacher, or the latter may find him a congregation of his own, for there is an exchange of information of this type between the religious leaders of a given locale. The training itself consists in reading the Quran and other devotional works, and committing the necessary prayers and formulae to memory. These tasks are by no means easy, and demand intellectual gifts above the average. The "best" mullas are those able to rehearse the entire Quran from memory, an exercise which requires almost a day. The Quran, it might be noted, is not recited in ordinary tones, but chanted, the voice rising and falling in various cadences. Because much of it is poetry, the tonal qualities of the words, the imagery they convey, and a dramatic and melodious delivery can elicit the strongest emotional response in listeners.

Mullas are drawn almost exclusively from the ranks of the commoners, and no one in Rowanduz could think of a case in which a member of the aristocracy had embraced such a career. A pious chieftain, as his age and reputation for sanctity increase, becomes known as a shaykh (Arabic, "old man"), a title which is sometimes hereditary, but does not

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officiate in the mosque. Such persons are believed by the
 villagers to be able to cure illnesses and confer other
 blessings through some physical quality in their persons.
 The office of mulla is far from lucrative, although some
 are privately wealthy, and they are expected to be models
 of modest and frugal behavior. One cannot see obscenity
 in the presence of a mulla, and no one would think of
 inviting him to a drinking party. Most persons rise when
 a mulla enters the room, although the chieftains, if the
mulla is a regular visitor, generally ignore this. The
 most respectful way of greeting such a person is to shake
 hands with him, and then kiss the palm of one's hand and
 place it over the heart. Mullas are not bound to celibacy,
 and the three in Kuwandus were married. The sons often
 follow their father's calling, as in the case of Mulla
 'Abd al-Karim Effendi, whose father was Mulla Is'ad
 Effendi. Of 'Abd al-Karim's family, which belongs to the
 wealthy commoner group, one brother was a landowner and
 his nephew a teacher. The mullas always wear garments in
 the Arab style, a single turban bound flat around a skull-
 cap, a long cloth caftan, and, in winter, a loosely-
 woven robe.

The mulla is assisted by a layman who fills the
 office of mu'azzin (from Arabic mu'adh-dhin, after giving
 the call to prayer) in addition to his regular occupation.
 In Kuwandus this was one of the older townsmen, a little
 man full of his own importance. The primary task of the
mu'azzin is giving the calls to prayer, again, a chant,

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the evil eye, but have other purposes. The bodyguard of a chieftain might carry one which protects his free gunfire, and a great number are used to cure badly ill. One of the gullis makes a practice of writing charms of this type. Such pieces of paper are usually soaked in water and the liquid is then inhaled. Recently a poor woman with some complaint visited the medical officer and the latter wrote her a prescription which could have been filled in Erbil. Under the impression that the medical officer, who neglected to explain the matter to her, operated like the gullis, the woman took the piece of paper to her home, sized it with water, and drank it off. It might be mentioned that she was cured, and, the doctor said, reappeared the next day to request an identical piece of paper as insurance against the illness in the future. There are many amateur practitioners of white magic in the town, farrishas, ashivas, and others, some of whom demand fees and others not. The barber, Hajji Mustafa, has one passage for all ill. He ties a piece of string about the patient's wrist and "graps" over it. The investigator was furnished with some almost classical rationalizations, of illnesses, for example, "if a man is bitten by a mad dog, he will be cured when the dog is killed."

The farrish (from a Persian word meaning "poor" and adopted into Arabic in this sense) occupies a position of considerable importance in everyday life. It is unnecessary here to discuss the origin and the character of the farrish

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movement as it evolved in the Medieval Islamic world, a development which corresponds to the rise of monasticism in the Christian states of Europe. Men were attracted to it for a variety of motives, some great in wealth or learning who delved in its esoteric lore, others sincerely devoted to the service of their faith and married, clever charlatans who lived off the bounty of the gullible, apolitical, revolutionaries, and a host of others. In short, it offered many things to many persons. There are two Sunni disciplines in Kurdish Iraq, the Qadiriya order (founded by 'Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani who died in 1166 and whose tomb is Baghdad in the foremost Sunni shrine in Iraq) and the Naqshbandiya order (originally begun in Central Asia in the fourteenth century). To illustrate the contrasting types of Sunni, it might first be noted that the chief guru of Rwanda, 'Abd al-Haris Iffendi, is a member of the Naqshbandiya order. While 'Abd al-Haris Iffendi, in the judgment of the townspeople and the government elite, is an intelligent, realistic person whose interest seems to be purely intellectual. On the other hand, the most extravagant apolitical in the lower ranks of the townspeople, Hajji Mustafa the barber, is a member of the Qadiriya order, and the reader will be able to appreciate something of his motives below.

In a district like that of Rwanda, men can ascend in society only by dint of considerable personal ability along certain lines. It has been noticed how youths,

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All that I can do therefore is to describe in superficial terms the social position of the Mulla in his function as village priest, and give some description of the scope as the visible evidence of the religious life of the community. I cannot make any attempt to describe beliefs or ritual practices in detail.

The Mulla

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Most of the larger villages have a resident Mulla. The functions and social position of this individual are by no means easy to define. His accomplishments are a supposed ability to read and write the Arabic language and an extensive knowledge of the Koran. This social equipment is acquired during a long period of training as a student, during which time he is permitted upon the village in which he lives, begging his keep and avoiding all serious manual labour. Most Mullas have one or two such pupils, some may have a dozen or more. They are not usually members of the local kinship group, but individuals who through some social misadventure have left their own group and are thus without normal means of support. The student whom I believe achieves a certain standard before he 'graduates' as a Mulla, but how this is defined is not clear, it certainly cannot be very high. The intellectual attainments of the Mulla vary very greatly. Some have a real understanding of Arabic and Persian and of the written literature of their own language; others merely learn the Koran by rote and recite portions of it on suitable occasions without any clear understanding of the meaning. Knowledge of the Koran does not even necessarily imply an ability to read - the Mulla student in Egypt was quite blind but was gradually acquiring the whole book. In general however the Mulla may be regarded as the most sophisticated member of the community. Some of the ordinary conversers are literate; most of the Agas would claim the distinction but I doubt their real ability - All Agas of Egypt for instance called to the Mulla both to read and write his letters, and Field Agha of Ispahan thought he could certainly read and converse fluently. In earlier times one of the Mulla's definite functions was to be scribe and general secretary to the Agas; conditions in this respect are changing rapidly owing to the fact that most Agas now are no longer well educated. Apart from such personal services to the Agas the Mulla's services to the community are roughly those of village priest. He leads the prayers in the mosque, and on the Fridays (Friday) supplements this with a brief sermon in Arabic, which is entirely unintelligible to his audience. He officiates at weddings and funerals and recites suitable verses from the Koran. It was hinted further that he is frequently called in to cure sickness - chiefly by means of prayers and charms and exorcism. I have no information at all as to the magical procedure involved, but the wide distribution of amulets and charms, especially among the women and the smaller children suggests that there is a field here for investigation.

In return for these services he receives from the Agas a